2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
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instances. This is especially the case with the brother-sister relationship in which the emotional and legal bond is very close. A man calls his sister by a special term—*nkashi*—to distinguish her from his classificatory sister whom he calls *munyinane* (plur. *bamunyinane*). A woman calls her brother *ndume* as distinct from her classificatory brother, whom she refers to also as *munyinane*. Both usually speak of this relationship in what struck me as a specially sentimental tone of voice. Natives seem to take pleasure in describing the brother's duty to look after (*ukusunga*) his sister, and say as a reason for this obligation that 'the man and the woman were born together from the same womb'.[1] The relationship is the subject of many proverbs and folk-tales in which the brother and sister are represented as succouring each other. In daily life, the man is on easy terms with his sister, particularly in the case of the royal family, where the interests of the two are specially identical. In Bemba society where there is a very even balance between patrilineal and matrilineal kinship there are two possible legal guardians for a woman, her father, or her mother's brother. After her father's death her brother takes the latter's place if he is old enough. Otherwise the mother's brother will look after her. Either brother, or mother's brother, will protect her if her husband dies, and defend her interests, if necessary, during the latter's life.[2] In the old days it was apparently quite common for an elderly woman to return to her brother's village to settle there in her old age and this she was able to do even if her husband remained alive by providing one of the brother's daughters as a substitute wife—*mpokoleshi*—in her place. Nowadays, besides the older women, younger women, widowed, divorced or deserted by husbands away at the mines, put themselves similarly under the protection of their elder brothers, and the phrase *Aya kuli ndume*—'she has gone to her brother'—signifies the return of the woman to her own matrilineal descent group.

The brother and sister also exert reciprocal rights over each other's children. In the old days the *nalume* had supreme power over his sister's son, and could even offer him as a slave in compensation for some irreparable injury he had committed to a

[1] *Bafyel·ve pamo mwuifumo limo.*

[2] If the brother is younger than the sister the position is reversed and I have found a young man with no obvious male guardian alive, living at the elder sister's village, having contracted a marriage there at her suggestion.

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601 third party. He could send for him to accompany him to war
604 or to make a long journey at the chief's bidding. Case histories
614 of older Bemba show frequent instances of men having settled in villages far from their original birthplace because they had 'followed their *nalume*' on some distant expedition in warrior days and had remained there. Nowadays the *nalume* can only exert these powers if he is of superior status to the father, or if the latter is away, or dead. The *nalume* has also certain rights over his maternal niece—also called *umwipwa*. He is consulted about her marriage and usually given a share of her marriage payment (*mpango*), which is technically speaking 'eaten' by the father.[1]

177 Direct European teaching and the introduction of a money
604 currency have strengthened the father's authority over his children
593 as against those of the mother's brother. The former pays tax for the household, buys the children's clothes, and pays the school fees. But, on the other hand, marriage is less stable under modern conditions, partly owing to the break-down of marriage morality and partly to the absence of so many men at the mines. In these circumstances, those few men who remain in the villages are bound to look after their sisters' children as well as their own in the last resort.

601 The paternal aunt, the *nyina senge*, also has rights over her
604 brother's children and particularly his daughters. She is believed
614 to have power to bless or curse her brother's daughter (*umwana senge*) with fertility or barrenness, and is much feared on that account.[2] In the old days she could demand her niece as a substitute wife for her husband—the *mpokoleshi* marriage described on p. 115, or as an additional one.[3] But the rights and duties of the *nyina senge* do not determine the residence of her *bepwa*, male and female, to any extent. However, it must be remembered
582 that cross-cousin marriages unite the households of brother and sister even more intimately than before, and that where the boy marries his *nyina senge's* daughter, he will go to live in her village, just as he who contracts a union with his *nalume's* child, goes to live in the latter's community. The sample village analysed

[1] This custom, an act of grace to the *nalume*—not his right, has become more important nowadays since money from 2*s*. 6*d*. to £1 has been substituted for the two bark-cloths given as *mpango* in the old days.

[2] And also given a share of the *mpanga* if possible.

[3] Nowadays this right seems to be rarely exerted. I only met three cases of its occurrence.

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A man helps his sister and her children by cutting them gardens or giving them uncooked food, but not by inviting them to share in the daily meals.

The men's group based on the matrilocal system is smaller and less closely knit. Between the sons-in-law attached to one household there is a feeling of close friendship and familiarity. These young men eat and work together, and the term *Ciufi munandi*, 'the man who married with me', or into the same family, is one of affection and good fellowship. There are no taboos between a man and his wife's sisters. He laughs and jokes with them because he may one day marry them, and he works in their gardens if they need help. But the young husbands often come from different villages and clans, and will want, as soon as they can, to have gardens of their own and perhaps to take their wives back to their villages. In the same way there may be co-operation from time to time between an old man and one of his own young kinsmen, such as his grandson or maternal nephew, but these also come and go, marry in other villages, and get work with Europeans. This group does not remain in close association throughout life as do the women of the matrilocal group, whether the latter remain in the same village or not.[1] This fact has important bearings at the present time. Though the unit of male labour is often non-existent, with the absence of so many of the men at the mines, the domestic and gardening economy of the women remains for the most part intact, and there seems no doubt that women deserted for months or even years by their husbands are more happily placed in a matrilocal community than in a patrilocal one.[2]

The Value of the Cooking Team.

The practical results of this type of domestic economics should be considered, since it is apparently one that is likely to change

[1] One legal case concerned a young married woman, one of six sisters, real or classificatory, who had lived in the same village and worked so happily together that when her husband removed her to his own village after the necessary years of service, she could not bear to live away from her family. The contrast between the cheerful female group in her own village and her relative isolation in her husband's community was too great. She ran back home for the third time during my stay at the village (Pambalasa, 1930). Divorce was the final result. Such a case is an extreme instance of the female solidarity which is so marked in a matrilocal tribe of this kind.

[2] Dr. Margaret Read confirms this on the basis of a comparative study between the patrilocal Ngoni and the matrilocal Chewa of Nyasaland.

Ideology and Dogma

(*mipashi*) mainly of the matrilineal line, which can be addressed at spirit shrines, the burial places of dead chiefs or in the huts of their individual descendants. They can also be born again with each new child, who acquires a *mupashi* as a guardian spirit, either from his mother's or his father's line, or from the royal dynasty of the territory in which he is born. These guardian spirits can also be inherited, and each dead man or woman is succeeded by a close relative of the same sex who acquires his or her name and guardian spirit.

(ii) *Malignant spirits*, (*fiwa*) who are the spirits of those who died with a feeling of injury because of some violent death, or who left the world with a sense of grievance. *Fiwa* return to strike their descendants with illness or misfortune.

(iii) *Living persons* who can produce good fortune by blessing (*ukupala amate*), which they do chiefly by calling on the ancestral spirits to which they have special right of address; or cursing, which they do through some less specified evil force. The blessings of a chief or a man in authority are particularly potent because of the great spirits such powerful persons have access to. The head of a matrilineage, or an important member of it can also bless in this way. A great social personage who has been injured or not given his due, is feared because he may withhold the blessings of the spirits, or actually pronounce curses (*ukutipa* or *ukulapishya*). The curse is specially important in relation to procreation and childbirth, since the malevolent wishes of the father's sister can produce barrenness in the woman, or impotence in the man. This is described as 'the great curse'. There are, however, a number of curses which can be used by injured people, who 'throw lightning' or are said to be able to 'throw lions', or who can threaten to curse, if their property is stolen, or when specially distressed by the treatment they have received.

(*b*) Impersonal forces include (i) *Magic* in general (*bwanga*), which is the force contained in the leaves, roots or barks of various trees or shrubs and a number of activating agencies (*fishimba*), such as parts of animals or human beings, which can be used by the specialist magician (*yanga*) for beneficent purposes (health, the production of crops, fertility and success) or for harmful purposes (illness, death or crop failure). *Buloshi* is evil magic or

The Cultural Setting

593 With this system of matrilineal descent the ties between a
●604 woman and her brother are very close. The woman produces children who are the heirs of her brothers. The man is the natural guardian of his sisters' children, and he must be consulted about his uterine niece's marriage and could claim the right to marry her where he pleased. He could protect her after her marriage if he wished to do so. The mother's brother could generally claim possession of his sister's children if her marriage broke down. In
[567] the old days he could give one of the children as a slave or a blood-wite to the head of a family to whom he or one of the lineage group owed reparation. He could command the services of his sister's son and bid him follow him to war. The woman in her turn could com-
[789] mand the services of her brother's daughter and was thought to be able to bless or curse the fertility of the latter's marriage. Brother and sister can take each other's property and behave in a free and easy way with each other.

591 Marriage is uxorilocal among the Bemba and among kindred
171 tribes such as the Bisa, Lala, Lamba, Cewa, and Kaonde which
596 also perform a kind of chisungu ceremony. A young man who marries goes to live in his wife's village where he builds himself a hut and becomes a member of her extended family. This is a domestic and economic unit. The sons-in-law work together under
[606] the father-in-law and the daughters with their mother. The man gives service to his father-in-law rather than cattle or other goods as in most other Bantu societies. A young couple has no cooking fire of its own to begin with. The girl cooks with her mother and sends food to her husband at the man's shelter, where he sits with his friends. At first the couple have no granary of their own and no gardens and when they acquire the latter, later in their married life, the gardens are cleared near those of the rest of the extended family group.

596 As a family group of this kind grows in size, its head often
621 chooses to separate from the old village and to start a new one of his own. Hence the desire of a Bemba to have many daughters in order to be able 'to found a house'.

591 After the marriage has been established, and children have been born to the union, it remains a question for individual decision whether the husband is given permission to remove his

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
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596 groom finds the early years of married life so irksome that the
591 union breaks up and he returns to his own home. Bemba recognize the difficult situation of the son-in-law and make jokes at the expense of the young bridegroom alone in his wife's village without kinsmen to support him. On the other hand, if the husband can live through these first years and the marriage proves itself stable, he can himself acquire status and prestige as head of his own extended family with sons-in-law working for him, whether he moves to one of his own relative's villages or stays where he is.

596 The second source of conflict is, of course, that between the
●604 father and the mother's brother for the control of the former's children and this is a tension inherent in the matrilineal system. The Bemba father is head of his own extended family and is the chief authority in his children's lives during their early years. He has rights over his daughters' marriage payments, and over the labour of his sons-in-law; his sons may decide to live with him, if he is a man of rank and popularity. Nevertheless the mother's brother is the legal guardian of the children, as we have seen, and can command his uterine nephews' services and can control the marriages of his uterine nieces if he pleases.

591 The Bemba girl is also in a position of conflict when she marries. She is happy with her mother and sisters in a village to which she belongs, but her husband may demand to take her, after a few years of married life, to some other village where his own relatives live. These difficulties are overcome if the husband marries within
[582] the village and there are various forms of preferential marriage, with the daughter of the father's sister for instance, which do not involve the moving of the girl from her mother's home.

596 In the case of a successful marriage which has endured for a number of years and has resulted in the birth of several daughters both the man and the woman reach an advantageous position. The father is head of an extended family and whether he lives in his wife's village, in his mother's brother's village, or has managed to start a small community of his own, he is in a position of power and authority. The woman in her turn, wherever she lives, has a group of closely related households co-operating with her. If she remains in her own village her married sisters will be near her; if she moves to her husband's village her own married daughters will

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585 burning log out of his hut to the crowd of waiting relatives outside. This is proof of his virility: the women shrill their plaudits and the men shout. The bride is given her marriage pot at dawn by her father's sister, and then follows the presentation of the bride and bridegroom to the community. Later comes the setting up of the fire-place for the girl and still later, perhaps after a year or two, the giving to the son-in-law of his granary and his garden.

421 The form of social structure I have described exists in a culture in which there is no permanent form of property, such as land or cattle, which could bind the members of a kinship group together or link one generation with the next. Consequently, social relations in Bemba society consist very largely of the giving and receiving of services.

556 Wealth consists of the power to command service such as a chief
622 calls for from his subjects, a headman from his villagers, a father-
606 in-law from his son-in-law, or a mother's brother from his maternal
● 604 nephews. Service could also be demanded in the old days from surrounding tribes which were raided for slaves.

556 Service makes it possible for a man to put big fields under cultivation, to build a big granary and hence to be able to feed more workers in another year.

622 Service was given to the chief in return for food provided at the capital and also the supernatural powers on which the people believed they depended. Service was given to the headmen from some of these motives also, but the headman was also usually a relative and he received these dues in his capacity as head of a kinship group. Those not so closely related he had to attract by a nice mixture of authority and the formal expression of courtesy.

576 In such a society the ceremonial expression of respect by kneeling
622 to a superior, clapping hands before him, offering him food in a specially formal fashion, or even rolling on the back is characteristic. Men should creep into the presence of their chief, throw themselves over on their backs and roll from side to side clapping their hands; the abject humility of the gesture is striking to the European observer. In such circumstances it will be readily under-
606 stood that the father-in-law attracts his son-in-law not only by the economic support he provides but by much formal giving of food

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
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daughters or grand-daughters as well as for their own daughters. In fact, it increases the reputation of a man of substance to be able to hold such a ceremony. He is said to 'dance the chisungu' of so-and-so (*ukumucindila icisungu*).

The mistress of the ceremonies (*nacimbusa*).[1] The *nacimbusa* organizes the rites, leads the dances and songs, and arranges for the making of the pottery and other emblems required. She is considered to perform a very important service. It is work that demands a detailed knowledge of ritual, industry in carrying through long and even arduous tasks, organizing ability, tact and personality. A successful *nacimbusa* probably has unusual intellectual ability as well as leadership and the power to attract women from surrounding villages to attend a ceremony and to keep a body of helpers alert and interested for some weeks. The *nacimbusa* is usually an elderly woman who has proved herself to be a successful midwife. The same terms are used for both roles. She is commonly, though not by means always, a member of the royal clan, and there is a tendency for the office to be hereditary. A *nacimbusa* will teach the secrets of the chisungu to her brother's daughter, to whom she owes special obligations, and from whom she can demand service, and she may also teach them to her own daughter. But mere heredity is not enough. A young woman must build up a reputation sufficient to win the confidence of parents so that they will call her in to 'dance their daughters' for them. To do this she must show assiduity in attending local ceremonies and attach herself as a special helper to the *nacimbusa*. She must show capacity and personality, and make a name for herself as a successful midwife. I heard from one old woman that a form of initiation of young *banacimbusa* took place in the old days, and that they were rubbed with medicine and paid an initiation fee, but this account was not substantiated.

The *banacimbusa* are treated with great consideration by other women in the community. In the old days they were allowed to wear a feather head-dress (*ngala*), which was reserved for certain chiefs and hereditary counsellors. They were given respect at a chief's court and have to report the carrying out of each chisungu ceremony to the chief. I am not sure whether this is still done at

[1] The plural prefix for nouns describing persons is 'ba'. Hence *banacimbusa*, or *banacisungu*.

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
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881 554 463 793 present, but *banacimbusa* are rather wealthier than their fellows owing to the payments they receive, and they carry themselves with considerable dignity and circumstance.

[608] The *nacimbusa* stands in a special relationship to the girl she has initiated throughout her life. She will probably deliver the girl's first child and act as *mbosua*, or special guardian, to the baby.

881 202 576 *The messenger.* In the old days when the exchange of feasts formed a more important part of the ceremony than they do now, the *nacimbusa* was assisted by a woman known as the *nakalamba*, who was employed to invite the guests to the ceremony by rolling on the ground in front of their houses—the Bemba form of obeisance to a chief. They also fetched clay for the pottery and supervised the ritual cooking of the food.

881 584 *The candidates and their bridegrooms.* The initiation candidate is known as the *nacisungu*. As I have said, these girls were usually betrothed before the ceremony, but it was possible to carry out rites in the case of a girl who was not yet affianced. The bridegroom of a betrothed girl takes part in certain of the ceremonies under the title of *shibwinga*, and this term is also extended to the sister or cross-cousin who may replace him in certain parts of the ceremony.

881 593 604 *The relatives.* Other relatives include the girl's parents and her father's sister. The girl's mother is responsible for providing food and beer, and her father's sister is believed to have a special influence over the fertility of her paternal niece and to stand in a special relationship to her. But the ring of relatives is comparatively small. The uxorilocal family is the chief unit involved.

881 533 *The character of the rite.* The chisungu is a popular ceremony involving much dancing and singing. There is a special drum-beat characteristic of chisungu ceremonies which is frequently used at ordinary beer feasts and always used throughout the rite. Drums are beaten inside the initiation hut, and on the dancing space outside, but they are also carried wherever the women go, some miles out into the bush and back again. The singing is accompanied, as always among the Bemba, by the beat of the drums and by the clapping of hands. Some songs are peculiar to the ceremony and are necessary parts of the rite, but some can be sung at other times. All the chisungu dances are of a characteristic type. They

881 535

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Appendix B

[881 533] *No.* 17. *The bridegroom's gift.* When looking for *mbusa* in the covered baskets the women sang:

[539]

Wakunkupukwila;	You have uncovered it,
Mwalye nsomo lye.	You have eaten the whole *nsomo.*

Interpretation. The *nsomo* was the bridegroom's gift. It refers to the gifts of food given ceremonially to the bridegroom during the different stages of the marriage ceremony. These dishes have small gifts placed on top and the food must be distributed and not eaten.

No. 18. *The girls' invitation.* The girls distribute the cooked food to their fellows and sing:

[539]

Fisabo fyesu fyapwa;	The food from our gardens is finished up;
Pokeni bamayo.	Help yourselves, mothers.

Interpretation. This is the song that goes with the rite that makes the girl free to garden. The women said: 'Now we have danced the child as a gardener. She must start to cultivate herself now.'

No. 19. *Begging for fire.* This is an important song sung as the women rubbed the fire-sticks in a frenzied effort to produce sparks (p. 76):

[539]

Twaisa kulonda mulilo	We have come to beg for fire.
Nkalamo twapapata.	Lion, we beg it of you.
No. 20. They also sang:	
Shikishiki!	Scratch! Scratch! (The operating of the fire-sticks)
Uafyala banga?	How many children have you borne?

[604 842] *Interpretation.* The sticks are rubbed on the back of the girl's father's sister who can give or withhold parenthood. The girl is told that she owes fire to the older woman whose hands ache from the rubbing. She must take over now. She must take her turn at the bearing of children now. The lion is the bridegroom, the chief, or the male principle throughout the ceremony. The bridegroom is

596 girl has no fire-place of her own when she marries, and remains a member of her mother's cooking-group, even as a young married woman. This extended family group is not a joint household in the sense of a compound surrounded by a wall, or a homestead or kraal separated from other houses by some form of hedge, but a group of households which cooperate even though the huts in which they live may be scattered through the village. When a married man 593 with children wins the right to remove his family to his own village, it is a unit of this kind which usually moves with him. Richards describes the delight of a Bemba man in the birth of daughters who will attract sons to 604 the village and build up a group of this kind. In fact, although a woman's children belong to her clan and must submit ultimately to the authority of 611 her brother, who could, in the old days, sell them into slavery, the father nevertheless acquires considerable authority over his wife and children in a stable marriage. When the children are small they obey him; when the daughters marry they stay at first under his rule; and even the sons who go elsewhere to marry, remember their father, give him presents and may even join him later in preference to living with their mother's brother. Children also take their father's name, although they belong to their mother's clan, and some "sons of the chief" are given minor chieftainships as well as the royal princes - the sisters' sons of the chief. Richards emphasizes the extent to which authority is divided between the father and the mother's brother in this area, with a tendency for the power of the father to increase under modern conditions.(1)

604 Richards states that the avunculate is stronger at the present day among the Bisa. It is not quite clear whether this is a structural difference or due to the fact that the Bisa are, on the whole, less in contact with European civilisation. Little is known of this aspect of kinship among the Aushi and Unga. There seems, however, to be a marked contrast between the position of the father and mother's brother among the Bemba and among the Cewa and Yao to the east, where the avunculate is again much more strongly developed and there seems to be some form of corporate matrilinage.(2)

596 It will be seen that as regards residence and common activities the effective kinship unit is not one based on unilineal descent, as is common among the patrilineal, patrilocal Bantu, but a loosely organised group of kinsfolk composed of near relatives on both sides of the family. The Bemba call this group a *lupwa*.

KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

601 The bilateral character of Bemba kinship ties is reflected in the system of nomenclature. It will be found that in one's own generation, where there is the maximum distinction in terminology, a man uses the term *munyinane* for his own brothers and for parallel cousins, male and female, on his father's and his mother's side. Only his own sister is called by a special term, *nkashi*. A woman in the same way uses the sibling term for her own sister and for her parallel cousins, male and female, but uses a special term, *ndume*, for her own brother. No marriage is possible between a man and any woman who is a *munyina* on the maternal or paternal side. A special term *mufyalu* is used by men and women for their cross-cousins, i.e. either for the father's

(1) Richards, 1, 1934 and 9, 1950. (2) Tew, 1950, pp.11, 43..